

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-12

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AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC HONOLULU HAWAII 0000

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 140875

FOR AMBASSADOR FM OAKLEY - CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO. 11652:GDS

TAGS:SREF, TW, VM, US

SUBJECT:FURTHER DEMARCHE TO GROC ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

REFERENCE: (A) STATE 022176 (E) TAIPEI 2124
(B) TAIPEI 0645 (F) STATE 036782
(C) STATE 069361 (G) TAIPEI 3013
(D) TAIPEI 2005 (H) BANGKOK 15325

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THE RECENT DRAMATIC INCREASE IN REFUGEES FLEEING VIETNAM
AND THE ELEMENTS OF PRC-VN CONFRONTATION OVER THE ISSUE
HAVE GREATLY INCREASED CONGRESSIONAL ATTENTION TO THE REFU-
GEE PROBLEM. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY OBVIOUSLY HAVE ALSO
GREATLY ENLARGED THE HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS OF THE PROB-
LEM AND THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL EFFORTS. UNDER THESE CIR-

CUMSTANCES, AMBASSADOR SHOULD SEEK APPOINTMENT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- SINCE MY LAST DEMARCHE CONCERNING REFUGEES THERE HAS BEEN A DRAMATIC INCREASE IN REFUGEES FLEEING VIETNAM, AND WE BELIEVE THE SITUATION WILL GROW WORSE BEFORE IT IMPROVES.

-- THE NUMBER OF BOAT CASE REFUGEES HAS RISEN FROM ABOUT 2,000 IN MARCH TO NEARLY 5,000 IN APRIL, AND OUR PRELIMINARY FIGURES INDICATE THERE WERE ANOTHER 5,000 IN MAY.

-- THE NUMBER OF ETHNIC CHINESE AMONG THE REFUGEES ESCAPING VIETNAM BY BOAT HAS INCREASED STEEPLY IN RECENT MONTHS; AND THE PROPORTION WHO ARE CHINESE MAY BE AS HIGH AS 60 PERCENT OF THE RISING NUMBER OF ESCAPEES.

-- VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE WAS DEEPLY IMPRESSED BY THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE REFUGEE SITUATION AND DEMONSTRATED OUR CONCERN BY VISITING REFUGEE CAMPS DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO SOUTHEAST ASIA. THE U.S. CONGRESS HAS ALSO INCREASED ITS ALREADY GREAT INTEREST AND CONCERN.

-- THE USG HAS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT IT INTENDS TO ACCEPT 25,000 INDOCHINESE REFUGEES PER YEAR OVER AT LEAST

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THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS.

-- THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG HAS INDICATED ITS WILLINGNESS TO SHOULDER AN INCREASED BURDEN UNDER CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES, EVEN THOUGH HONG KONG IS ALREADY ONE OF THE MOST CROWDED AREAS ON EARTH.

-- ON MAY 17 AUSTRALIA ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL TAKE 9,000 INDOCHINESE REFUGEES FOR PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT DURING A ONE-YEAR PERIOD BEGINNING JULY 1. THIS IS AN ANNUAL INCREASE OF 1,000 OVER WHAT THE GOA HAS ACCEPTED PREVIOUSLY.

-- WE APPRECIATE THE ROC'S DECISION TO GIVE "FIRST COUNTRY" ASYLUM TO BOAT CASE REFUGEES ARRIVING IN TAIWAN. WE ALSO APPRECIATE GROC'S OFFER TO ALLOW ALL BOAT CASE REFUGEES OF CHINESE ORIGIN WHO ARRIVE IN TAIWAN TO RESETTLE PERMANENTLY IN THE ROC. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OAKLEY SPECIFICALLY COMMENDED THESE INITIATIVES IN HIS MAY 12 HIRC SUBCOMMITTEE TESTIMONY.

-- HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THE DRAMATIC UPSWING IN BOAT REFUGEES HAS ALTERED THE SITUATION AND I HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED

TO ASK YOU TO RECONSIDER YOUR POLICIES WITH A VIEW TOWARD ADMITTING FOR PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF ETHNIC CHINESE BOAT REFUGEES WHO HAVE ARRIVED IN THAILAND AND ELSEWHERE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. THIS POINT WAS ALSO MADE IN OAKLEY'S MAY 12 TESTIMONY.

-- THE CURRENT SITUATION, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE OVERTONES OF A DISTINCTLY ANTI-CHINESE POLICY ON THE PART OF THE VIETNAMESE, HAS BEEN A SUBJECT OF PARTICULAR CONGRESSIONAL ATTENTION. IN A DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE ON

JUNE 1 A NUMBER OF CONGRESSMEN POINTEDLY ASKED A SENIOR DEPT OFFICIAL WHY THE ROC WAS WILLING TO DO SO LITTLE TO REPATRIATE ETHNIC CHINESE REFUGEES NOW IN THAILAND, CONFIDENTIAL

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MALAYSIA AND ELSEWHERE, AT A TIME WHEN THE PRC IS DIRECTLY REPATRIATING LARGE NUMBERS FROM VIETNAM. THE DEPT OFFICIAL POINTED TO THE OBVIOUS DIFFERENCES IN THE SITUATION. STILL, WE BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT THE GROC BE AWARE OF CONGRESSIONAL SENTIMENT ON THE ISSUE.

-- WE NOTE THAT ALTHOUGH YOUR CAL OFFICE IN THAILAND HAS AGREED TO ACCEPT APPLICATIONS FROM ETHNIC CHINESE REFUGEES, IN FACT NO BOAT REFUGEES WHO MANAGED TO REACH THAILAND HAVE BEEN ADMITTED FOR PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT SINCE YOUR NEW POLICIES WERE IMPLEMENTED. IT APPEARS THAT THE CRITERIA BEING APPLIED EFFECTIVELY EXCLUDE SUCH RESETTLEMENT.

-- WE ASK THAT YOU REVIEW YOUR POLICIES AND WOULD HOPE YOU WOULD BE ABLE TO ALTER YOUR PROCEDURES IN A MANNER THAT WOULD ALLOW ALL OF THE APPROXIMATELY 600 ETHNIC CHINESE AMONGST THE BOAT REFUGEES NOW IN THAILAND TO RESETTLE IN TAIWAN, AND WOULD ADMIT FUTURE ETHNIC CHINESE REFUGEES ARRIVING IN THAILAND.

-- WE ALSO HOPE THAT YOU WOULD INDICATE A REFUGEE CONTACT POINT IN MALAYSIA SIMILAR TO THAT IN THAILAND.

-- WE RECOGNIZE THE BURDEN WHICH THIS NEW PROGRAM WOULD PLACE UPON YOUR LIMITED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE RESETTLEMENT. TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, THE USG WOULD BE WILLING TO ASSIST BY PROVIDING HEALTH AND SECURITY CHECKS ON POTENTIAL REFUGEES, AND BY COOPERATING IN THE PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS IN THAILAND AND MALAYSIA.

-- MY GOVERNMENT WOULD APPRECIATE LEARNING WHAT FURTHER MEASURES YOU MAY BE ABLE TO TAKE.
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CHRISTOPHER

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